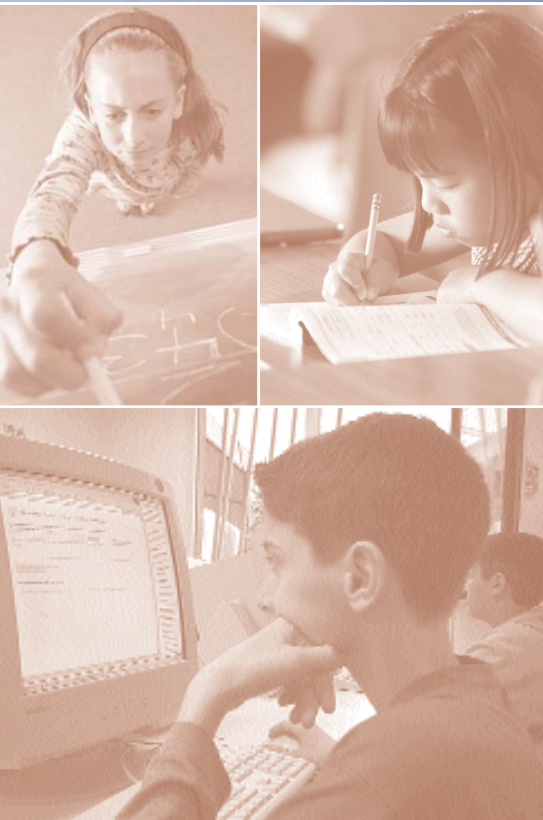


# State Representative **Joe Micon**



## *Session Report*



- ☒ The New State Budget
- ☒ Economic Development Initiatives
- ☒ K-12 Funding
- ☒ Higher Education

# INDIANA'S NEW BUDGET



## School Funding Cuts and Increased Property Taxes

The new state budget that passed by a narrow margin increases property taxes and, at the same time, cuts funding for local schools. After years of bipartisan efforts to reform education and reduce property taxes, the majority party has approved a budget that will cut state funding for many schools and raise property taxes by nearly \$850 million.

I voted "NO" on the final version of the state budget because of the negative impact it will have on education, children and those who pay property taxes. I believe there will be many victims of the new state budget.

There are no minimum guarantees in state funding for schools, which means more than 140 school corporations will receive less money. Those corporations will be forced into eliminating teachers, cutting programs and increasing class sizes. Any additional funding for public

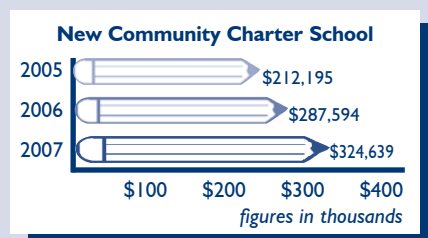
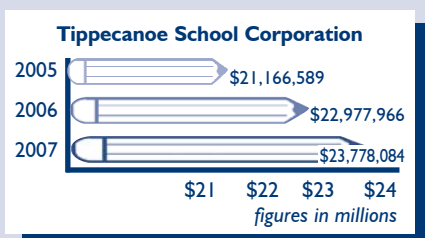
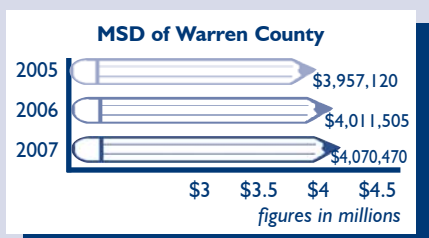
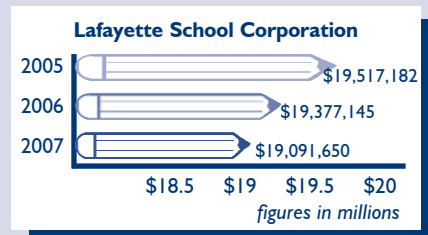
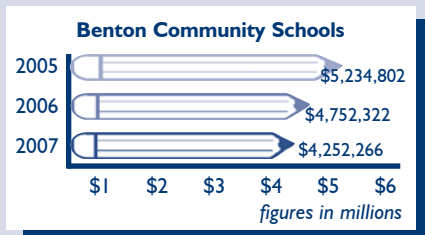
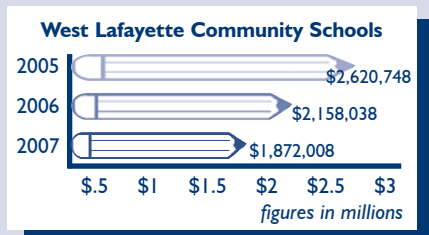
schools will come primarily from raising property taxes.

There will be reduced state support through the Property Tax Replacement Credit (PTRC), another move that will increase local property taxes. This eliminates the promise of just three years ago to provide more state support to combat rising property taxes in light of the historic and controversial statewide reassessment.

In addition, funding for the program that provides health care for the elderly, disabled and children will increase by five percent, although bipartisan experts have predicted a 10-percent growth. State assistance for road repairs and improvements will decrease as well.

It is a shame that the legacy of this session will be passage of a state budget that turns its back on Indiana's schoolchildren and property taxpayers. For anyone who cares about education and local taxpayers, it is simply indefensible.

Many local school corporations will see a decrease in funding under the new state budget. Here is the breakdown:



Source: Legislative Service Agency

# Economic Development

I believe it is the duty of the General Assembly to provide the opportunities for Indiana to **create, maintain and increase good-paying jobs** in growth areas of our economy. This year's legislature made economic development a priority.

In fact, the very first bill passed into law this session created a new public-private group—the Indiana Economic Development Corporation—to serve as the leader for development efforts across our state. I was especially pleased we were able to make changes to this corporation that will ensure it is accountable to the public.



Other measures designed to help spur economic growth include **increasing the research and development tax credit**, phasing out the sales tax on research and development equipment, and extending the life and use of EDGE tax credits that help businesses retain and create jobs.

We also passed a measure that will speed the process of obtaining permits so developers can begin construction on new industrial sites. **Small business owners will receive additional tax breaks** under new legislation that will also reduce the potential that they will be harmed by government regulation.

All of these reforms can help economic growth in Indiana. We must remain attuned to the opportunities in a changing environment, and I will continue to search for ways to grow our economy and increase good-paying jobs.

## Higher Education



I was disappointed to see the House majority pass a budget that failed to increase funding for Purdue University. I believe the consequences of failing to adequately fund higher education across Indiana are too great to ignore, and that was one of the primary reasons I voted against the final version of the bill.

It didn't take long for students and their families to feel the effects, as Purdue announced tuition hikes of six percent over each of the next two years. Combining this increase with the certain rise in property taxes that will result from this budget is an unacceptable burden to place on families across Indiana.

The budget did allow bonding authority for Purdue to make improvements in the electric and steam generation plants, and it also maintained the current levels for need-based grants from the State Student Assistance Commission of Indiana.

Our local Ivy Tech campus gained a boost with additional funding that addressed the enrollment growth at locations around the state. I am hopeful Ivy Tech will have the resources needed to maintain its expansion and impact on our community.

## Human Services

New legislation will extend the state earned income tax credit through 2011. The program benefits more than 400,000 Indiana workers based on income guidelines and the size of their families. Contact my office for more information.

In addition, we were able to maintain funding for CHOICE, a popular and beneficial program that enables Hoosiers to receive care in the comfort and familiarity of their homes. I was disappointed a bill to raise the state's minimum wage, last increased in 1998, failed to receive a hearing this session.

## Protecting Firefighters

Volunteer firefighters and emergency medical technicians will not be penalized by their employers for being absent when they are responding to emergency calls.



## Alternate Fuels

Whenever possible, state government vehicles will be required to run on agriculture-based fuels, such as biodiesel, ethanol or gasohol.



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# 2005 Session Highlights



Rep. Micon joins colleagues to protect Indiana's Home Health Care Program.



2005 Legislative Interns from Purdue meet with Reps. Micon and Klinker.



Rep. Micon meets with Andre and Marie Parent when they serve as pages.



Rep. Micon speaks with Rep. Sheila Klinker in the House chamber.



Rep. Micon meets with students from Battle Ground Elementary School.



Father Dan Davis, Minister of the Day in the chamber, talks with Rep. Micon.

## Representative Joe Micon

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